



Lowell City Council

Elect. Laws Redistricting Joint Rules SC Minutes

Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Date: February 25, 2020
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: City Council Chamber
375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA.

PRESENT:

Present on Roll Call were C. Rourke, C. Elliott, C. Chau, C. Mercier, C. Conway. Also present was C. Nuon, C. Samaras, City Solicitor O'Connor, Asst. City Solicitor Rachel Brown and C. Drinkwater.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

C. Rourke called the meeting to order. Members of the Election Laws/Redistricting SC are C. Rourke, C. Elliott and C. Chau. Members of the Rules SC are C. Elliott, C. Mercier and C. Conway.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

C. Elliott commented on the motion for Charter change regarding selection of the Mayor and that it was an appropriate time to discuss matter as current structure of government will be changing due to the Consent Decree. C. Elliott noted preference to Worcester model regarding selection of Mayor by popular vote of at large candidates. Solicitor O'Connor commented on language in the Consent Decree regarding selection of the Mayor. C. Chau commented on selection of only at large candidates for Mayor. Solicitor O'Connor noted that all models could be adjusted to conform to Council preference. C. Conway questioned at large versus district candidates vying for Mayor and that there should be information to select the better method. C. Nuon commented on the Consent Decree. Solicitor O'Connor noted the language which would require court involvement with any change. C. Rourke noted all changes are done with authority of court. C. Samaras noted the need to discuss all options regarding selection of Mayor which may include allowing subsequent Council to choose system. C. Samaras noted that it may be difficult for a minority to become Mayor from an at large selection. C. Mercier did not agree that anyone is put at a disadvantage and noted that this Council should be these decisions. C. Drinkwater noted that all options should be available as the matter is discussed.



C. Rourke questioned time line for any proposed changes. Solicitor O'Connor outlined the Home Rule Petition process. C. Rourke noted his preference of at large candidates only be eligible for Mayor. **Motion** by C. Elliott, seconded by C. Mercier to recommend to City Council to have Law Department prepare a Home Rule Petition to enable City to select a Mayor similar to City of Worcester charter. Motion and second was withdrawn by C. Elliott and C. Mercier after further discussion. C. Elliott noted no need to make a complicated system and that no person would be disadvantaged and that if need to work with Consent Decree then it should be done. C. Nuon noted need to work with Plaintiffs of the lawsuit before deciding on selection process for the Mayor. C. Rourke noted the difficulty with Consent Decree. Solicitor O'Connor noted the obligation to deal with Plaintiff in terms of the Consent Decree. C. Samaras noted that there is no need to rush the decision. C. Drinkwater commented that need to move forward and question the language of the pending motion. C. Elliott withdrew his motion and made a **Motion** to request representative from Worcester be invited to discuss their model in selectin a Mayor, seconded by C. Mercier. So voted. Meeting was opened to public and Sidney Liang and Zoe Arthur addressed the body. C. Conway noted added information will be helpful. Solicitor O'Connor noted that discussions regarding Consent Decree must be initiated with plaintiffs. C. Rourke noted preference to selectin Mayor from at large candidates.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by C. Conway, seconded by C. Chau. So voted.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Michael Q. Geary, City Clerk
